

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Community philanthropist dies

□ Ray Hickey's contributions
will continue to make a
difference in local cities

By Dawn Feldhaus

Post-Record staff

Washougal resident Ray Hickey's legacy will not soon be forgotten, as evidenced in comments made by local leaders and citizens.

Hickey, 82, died at home on April 14.

Washougal Mayor Sean Guard recalls meeting him many years ago.

"I only saw him six to seven times, but he always remembered my name," Sean said. "I always thought of him as a very kind person, and one of the most considerate people I had met. He was very genuine."

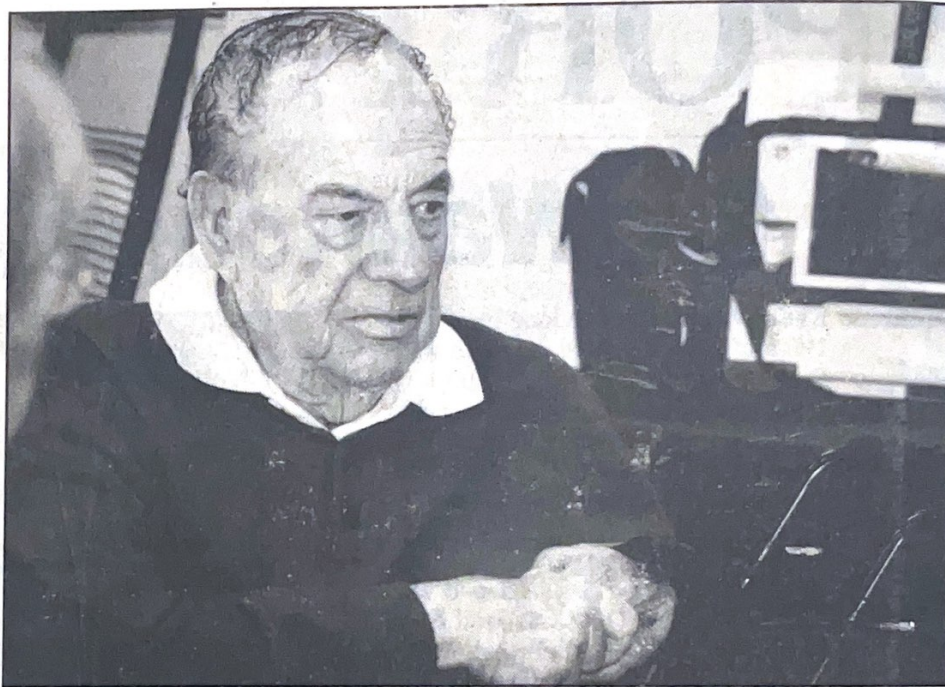
During last night's Washougal City Council meeting, Michael Rothchild, a Washougal resident, referred to Hickey's humble beginnings as a deckhand for Tidewater Barge Lines. Hickey purchased the company in 1983 and sold it 13 years later.

He is credited with donating more than \$20 million to area projects, including land for the Waterfront Renaissance Trail in Vancouver.

"A lot of his donations were anonymous," Rothchild said. "That is inspiring."

Hickey's support of causes in the Camas-Washougal area included paying for newspaper ads that supported the East County Fire and Rescue levy in 2008. A year earlier, he donated nearly \$120,000 to purchase three motorized gurneys and four LifePak 12 monitor/defibrillators for the Camas Fire Department. In 2003, Hickey donated \$27,300 to purchase 12 automated external defibrillators.

"The contributions he's made to us have made a huge impact on the community," CFD Chief Leo Leon said Monday. "It benefits all three communities — Camas, Washougal and the East County Fire and Rescue



Ray Hickey

FILE PHOTO

district. He has saved a lot of lives with the equipment he bought for us.

"He just wanted to help people but not get any attention for doing it," Leon added.

The CFD created the "Ray Hickey Award for distinguished service." So far, recently retired Camas Public Works Director Monte Brachmann has been the only recipient of the award.

In addition to donating to the CFD, Hickey has purchased classroom supplies for the YWCA's Y's Care children's program. In 2002, he and his family donated \$1.5 million toward the construction of a hospice in Vancouver.

"After some significant arm twisting, Hickey agreed to lend his name to the facility," said Ken Cole, public affairs coordinator for Southwest Washington Medical Center, in 2004.

The Ray Hickey Hospice House

opened in May of that year.

In 2001, his foundation donated \$300,000 to the Jack Will, and Rob Youth Center, in Camas.

Hickey is survived by his son, Wes Hickey and daughters, Cindy Nesbitt and Linda Hickey, seven grandchildren and numerous, nieces, nephews and cousins.

Visitation will be Friday, from noon to 9 p.m., at Evergreen Memorial Gardens, 1101 N.E. 112th Ave., Vancouver. The funeral will be held Saturday, at 11 a.m., at the Vancouver First Church of God, 3300 N.E. 78th St., Vancouver. A reception will follow the service, and interment will be private.

Donations can be made to the YWCA Clark County, Doernbecher Children's Hospital Foundation, or the Ray Hickey Hospice House. To send condolences or sign the online guest book, visit www.evergreenmemorialgardens.com.